

Clean Water Fund's “Watershed to Water Tap Project”

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*National Source Water Protection
Conference
June 2, 2003*

Background on the project

- Problem: The formal SWAP process mandated by the SDWA (1996) does not involve citizens in the process on a local level.
- Formal SWAP process in Mass. only requires citizen involvement on the state level in an Advisory Committee (that CWF was on) to help determine state SWAP strategy.
- Therefore, SWAP recommendations are unlikely to engage citizens in the implementation process--leaving an important resource untapped.
- Solution: We need to foster local citizen involvement in the SWAP process.

Strategy of Project:

- Conduct citizen trainings on water supply protection throughout Eastern Massachusetts.
- Partner with local/regional environmental groups and municipal officials to gather info on local issues and spread word about trainings.

Local Community Groups/Officials we've involved in Trainings

- Local/Regional Groups:
 - Watershed Organizations, Land Trusts, League of Women Voters, Sierra Club, Neighborhood Associations, Church groups, organizations representing the Elderly, and local environmental groups.
- Local Government:
 - Selectmen, Mayor, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Planning Dept., Dept. of Public Works, state Reps/Senators.

Content of Trainings

- (1) Drinking Water Right To Know Report (Consumer Confidence Report)- what they are; what their local RTK says; how citizens can use them.
- (2) Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP); what SWAP is; if SWAP is done for their town, what it says, what are the recommendations.

What Citizens Can Learn from Right To Know Reports

Information required in all RTK's includes:

- The Source of your drinking water.
- Contaminants that have been detected in the water after it has been treated.
- The *Likely* Source of Contaminants detected in your drinking water.
- Any violation of Federal or State drinking water standards/action levels—and what they are doing to address the problems.
- Health Information for everyone, and especially for people who are more likely to be harmed by common drinking water contaminants.
- Information on how concerned citizens can get involved in protecting their community's drinking water.

Recommendations for Improving these Reports

- Use a map to illustrate the source when possible.
- Use a print size that is no smaller than 12 point.
- Provide consumers the information they need without overwhelming them.
- Make the table of contaminants as reader friendly as possible.
- Distribute to all drinking water consumers in service area, not just bill payers.
- Do not make blanket statements about the safety of the drinking water.

SWAP Process

- (1) DELINEATION of water supply sources and protection areas
- (2) INVENTORY potential sources of contamination
- (3) CONTAMINANT INVENTORY
- (4) SUSCEPTIBILITY DETERMINATION
- (5) WIDELY PUBLICIZING RESULTS
 - public meetings, press releases, RTK's, bill stuffers, and web page
- ADD: (6) Action Plan

Collaborating with Local groups/officials

- We thought of how each group played a different niche in the community and attempted to tie different interests together on source water protection.
- When working with local officials, we wanted to ensure that “the left hand was communicating with the right”. Do the different committees in charge of implementing SWAP recommendations even know that such a document exists?

What gets targeted people/groups to trainings?

How to get people to the training:

- Direct mailing
- phone calls
- co-sponsors' listserves/newsletters
- community calendars (on web and newspapers)
- press releases
- church bulletins
- flyers in high traffic areas
- public access TV stations

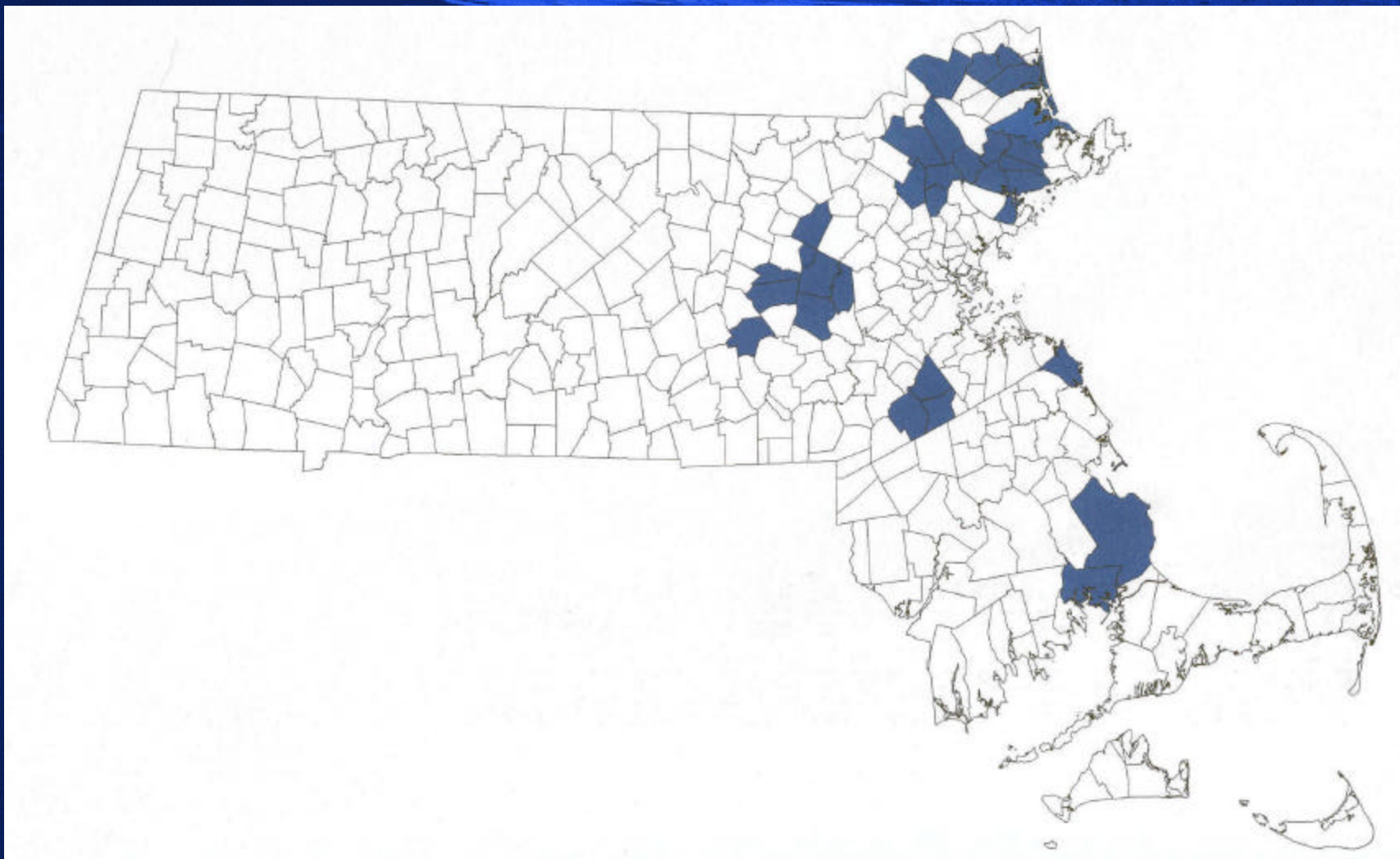
What are some issues that have drawn participants to the Clean Water Fund trainings?

- Active interest in local water resource protections (Salem/Beverly)
- Immediate threat to drinking water quality (Wilmington; unlined landfill leaching into aquifer, with contaminated soil being dumped on it to further contaminate aquifer)
- Water quantity issues affecting local resources (Sharon, Canton, and Stoughton)
- Development pressures (Wayland/Framingham)

Outreach and Education

- 14 trainings conducted throughout E Mass reaching 31 cities/towns
- 245 people engaged
- 39 groups we've collaborated with to gather local info and help boost turnout

Training Locations



Success (large turnout)

Newburyport Training (1/28/03)

- 60 attendees
- Groups represented: local Sierra Club chapter, Parker River Clean Water Assoc., and Citizens for Environmental Balance
- How we got people there: listserves, tons of flyers, phone calls, press releases
- What issues/concerns got people there: multi-jurisdictional issues and development pressure in wetland areas
- Outcome of meeting? Agreement to work with West Newbury residents to improve protection of common water supply

Less successful (small turnout) Plymouth (5/14/03)

- Four (4) attendees
- Groups tried: listserves
- How we tried to get people there: Public Access TV, mailing, press releases
- What issues/concerns we think got people there: runoff and septic concerns
- Outcome of meeting? The four attendees wanted to be contacted when we learned that the SWAP was completed, so they can become engaged in the process.

Accomplishments of some trainings

- All trainings: added participants to our database to be contacted when SWAP completed & with action alerts
- Scituate - Water Commissioner from adjacent town learned from local watershed group that his watershed delineation for surface water supply needed to be corrected.
- Wilmington - Zone II threatened by deposition of contaminated soil; we advised them on new protection bylaws that could better protect the aquifer- bill filed to prohibit deposition of contaminated soil into Zone II

More Accomplishments

- North Andover - suggestion made that to help get SWAP recommendations implemented; get annual updates of progress on SWAP into “Town Reports” that all Mass. Towns required to print each year (bill filed at State House to require such reporting).
- Wayland- trained attendees on how to submit comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report for a 700 unit development threatening town well. Result- they submitted 100 comment letters.

Suggested Action Plan items

General Issues for Citizens:

- Review RTKs every year
- Get involved in the SWAP process- help town officials review the SWAP, the maps that go along with them, identify potential threats and solutions.
- Make sure that Selectmen, Board of Health, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission have copies of the SWAP.
- Encourage the town to implement the SWAP recommendations- ask the Selectmen to include an update in each year's Town Report
- Form a Surface Water/Wellhead Protection Team

Our suggestions communicating results of Mass. Source Water Assessments

- A need for more involvement on the community level for state SWAP coordinators.
- Re-establish state money for technical assistance funds for water suppliers and other stakeholders (including non-profits).
- There should be a periodic reassessment of SWAPs to ensure that it's an "evolving document".

Future Plans:

- New England Training on Source Water Protection in October 2003:
 - One day targeted for municipal officials and the next for concerned citizens.
 - Goal is to educate both audiences on source water protection and start collaboration, stop the disconnect.
 - Continue outreach to Mass. Stakeholders.
 - Also doing this in 4 other regions through a National EPA grant.

Continued

- Procure more funding to continue citizen involvement in Source Water Protection activities.

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